

- Jobless rate falls to 4.6% as the number of jobs increases by 13,300
- Production at sawmills dips in August
- Canadian economy picks up speed in August

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped to 4.6% (seasonally adjusted) in October, as robust job growth of 0.6% (+13,300 workers) was more than enough to absorb a 0.4% increase in the size of the labour force.** Together, BC and Alberta (where there were 22,600 (+1.2%) net new jobs) accounted for about 70% of the increase in employment at the national level. BC's unemployment rate remains near its historical low of 4.3% (recorded in June), while Alberta's rate dropped to 3.0%, the lowest level on record since 1976, the first year for which provincial data are available.

Canada's unemployment rate fell to 6.2%. The improvement in the Canadian jobless rate was largely due to employment growth (+0.3%), most of which occurred in the west. The labour force was unchanged from September's level.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **In BC, the goods and service sectors took on more workers in October, with both posting 0.6% increases in employment.** On the goods side, job growth was concentrated in utilities (+12.4%) and manufacturing (+2.3%). Other industries in the sector reduced the size of their workforce in October. Among service industries, public administration (+4.7%) and accommodation & food services (+3.1%) posted the strongest increases. Retail & wholesale trade (-1.5%) and transportation (-1.5%) were the only service-sector industries where employment declined.

The number of public sector jobs in BC advanced 0.2%, while the private sector employed 0.8% more people. Both men (+0.5%) and women (+0.7%) benefited from October's job growth. However, there were fewer women (-1.3%) with full-time jobs, and as a result full-

time employment dropped 0.3%. On the other hand, the number of women working part-time jumped 5.7%, leading to a big increase in total part-time employment (+4.2%). The youth unemployment rate climbed slightly, rising to 8.2% but the jobless rate for those aged 25 and over fell to 3.9%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Among the regions, jobless rates ranged from 4.3% (3-month-moving average, unadjusted) in Mainland/Southwest to 7.2% in North Coast/Nechako, where the number of jobs and the size of the labour force have been shrinking in tandem.** Last month, employment in the region fell 10.9%, while the labour force declined to 9.9% below the October 2005 level. Kootenay (where employment dropped 1.1%) is also experiencing softer labour market conditions. Unemployment rates were up in Cariboo (5.3%), Northeast (5.2%), and North Coast/Nechako (7.2%), but are still well below the levels seen earlier in the decade.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Production at sawmills and planing mills in BC was slightly lower (-1.0%) in August than in the same month last year.** Mills in the interior produced 1.2% more lumber but coastal mills decreased output by 13.5%. Canadian production was also down (-3.4%), largely because of slowed activity in Quebec (-10.9%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

Public Debt

- **British Columbia's net financial debt stood at \$19.2 billion, or \$4,527 per capita, on March 31, 2005, down 9.7% from 2004.** This was the lowest per capita net debt among the nine provinces which continue to carry a debt burden. Newfoundland & Labrador (\$19,439) had the biggest per capita debt, significantly more

Did you know...

60% of married people in BC say their partner snores when sleeping. That's well above the national average. Only 54% of Canadians say they have a snoring spouse. *Source: Ipsos Reid*

than in second-place Quebec (\$13,173). Alberta (-\$6,040), Yukon (-\$9,032) and NWT (-\$1,140) were all net savers by the end of the 2004/05 fiscal year.

The average debt for all provinces and territories was \$8,045 per capita, down from \$8,152 in the 2004 fiscal year. The total debt of provincial/territorial governments in Canada was \$259 billion, or 19.4% of the nation's GDP.

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Financial Management System

Note to Readers

These debt figures are derived from the Financial Management System and differ from information presented in the Public Accounts. The data have been adjusted to ensure comparability across provinces, and use a definition of provincial and territorial general government which includes all activities of government whether they are performed by ministries or by "arm's length" agencies (such as the Workers' Compensation Board).

Air Traffic

- **Vancouver International Airport remained the second-busiest airport in the country, after Toronto's Pearson Airport, in August.** There were 33,679 aircraft that took off or landed in Vancouver, compared to 38,763 in Toronto. The third-busiest airport was Calgary International, with 22,259 aircraft arrivals and departures. International airports in Montreal (19,768) and Ottawa (12,475) were not quite as busy. The international airport in BC's capital city ranked seventh-busiest, with 15,903 aircraft movements in August.

Data Source: Transport Canada

Parental Benefits

- **Eligibility and access to maternity and parental benefits for Canadian mothers with a child under 12 months of age were unchanged in 2005.** Sixty-four percent of new mothers received maternity or parental benefits during pregnancy or after the birth/adoption of their child. The proportion of fathers who claimed or intended to claim parental benefits increased to over 14% in 2005. Until last year, the rate had remained relatively stable (at approximately 11%) since the implementation of extended parental benefits to fathers in 2002. The average duration of maternity-leave among paid workers was 11 months in 2005. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

The Nation

- **Canada's economy expanded 0.3% (seasonally adjusted) in August, as both the goods (+0.2%) and service (+0.4%) sectors posted solid gains.** The increase was the strongest since February. A boom in mining, oil & gas extraction (+1.6%) offset weakness in other goods industries, including manufacturing, which stalled (0.0%) for the second month in a row.

In the service sector, both wholesale (+1.7%) and retail (+1.1%) trade continued to grow at a fast clip. A three-month-long downturn in arts, entertainment & recreation (+1.8%) came to an end and accommodation & food services expanded (+0.8%) for the first time since May. Growth in other service industries was not as strong, but most made gains in August.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canadian manufacturers' prices were 1.3% higher this September than in the same month last year.** Rising prices for primary metals (+28.5%) and pulp & paper (+4.1%) offset declines in the price of petroleum & coal products (-11.3%), lumber (-6.3%), and motor vehicles & other transportation equipment (-3.5%). The year-over-year increase in the overall Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) was the lowest it has been since March, largely due to falling prices for petroleum & coal products. Excluding petroleum & coal, the overall IPPI would have been 2.9% higher than in September 2005.

The appreciation of the Canadian dollar is also driving producer prices down, since many Canadian commodities are sold in international markets. Excluding the exchange rate effect, producer prices would have risen 2.8% (rather than 1.3%) over the twelve month period.

BC softwood lumber prices continued to fall (-2.9%) with both coastal (-5.4%) and interior (-2.0%) producers receiving less for their products than in September of last year. Prices for BC pulpwood chips were unchanged (+0.0%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

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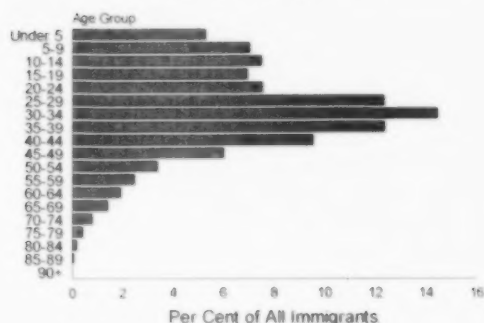
Originally published in *Immigration Highlights* Issue 06-2. Annual Subscription \$30 +GST

Age, Family and Marital Characteristics of B.C. Immigrants

The median age of immigrants arriving in British Columbia has gradually increased from 28.9 years in 1981 to 32.8 years in 2005. However, recent immigrants are still significantly younger than the population of the province, which had a median age of 39.5 years in year 2005.

During the ten year period 1996-2005, nearly half (48.7%) of immigrants were between 25 and 44 years old at the time of their landing. Approximately a quarter of the immigrants were in school ages, and only about 3 per cent were aged 65 years or older.

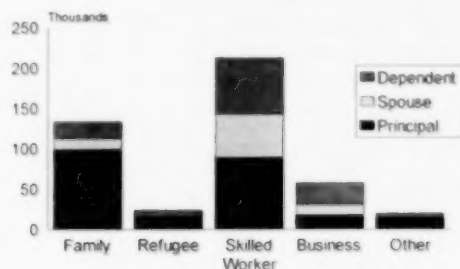
Age Distribution of B.C. Immigrants
Landed 1996-2005



One of the reasons that immigrants tend to be younger than the overall population is the higher proportion of immigrants admitted under the skilled worker and business classes. Skilled worker immigrants tend to be either younger singles or middle age people with young families. Similarly, immigrants in the business classes tend to come to Canada with their family members and usually with younger accompanying children.

Of the business immigrants who arrived during 1996-2005, 28 per cent were the principal applicants (the person whose qualifications were assessed during the application process), 25 per cent were spouses of the principal applicants, and 47 per cent were their children. This indicated that business immigrants tended to come to Canada as a family unit, commonly accompanied by an average of two children. Similarly, skilled worker immigrants were composed of 41 per cent principal applicants, 26 per cent spouses and 33 per cent children. Skilled worker immigrants tended to have a smaller family size because some were younger people who might have recently finished school or had few years of work experience. In contrast, those in the business category tended to be established business people in their middle ages.

B.C. Immigrants by Class by Family Status
Landed 1996 - 2005



On the other hand, almost three-quarters of family immigrants were the principal applicants, 11 per cent were spouses, and 14 per cent were children. Many of the family immigrants were admitted as individuals in the categories of spouses, fiancées or parents of their Canadian relatives.

B.C. Immigrants by Marital Status

Landed 1996 - 2005, Aged 20+



Three in every four adult immigrants were married at their time of landing. Naturally, immigrants in the family and business classes were relatively more likely to be married. On the other hand, a higher proportion of refugees and live-in care givers were single. They were also relatively more likely to be divorced or separated at the time of arrival in B.C. when compared to other classes of immigrants.



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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)		
	Jul 1/06	% change on one year ago
BC	4,310.5	1.2
Canada	32,623.5	1.0
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2005	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	168,011	6.8
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)	144,028	3.5
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)	33,853	2.2
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)	20,693	2.5
TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)		
		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Aug	3,567	4.8
Merchandise Exports - Aug	2,697	-1.9
Retail Sales - Aug	4,536	1.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - Sep 2006)	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
BC	1.0	1.9
Vancouver	1.4	1.8
Victoria	0.7	1.9
Canada	0.7	2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Oct '06	% change on prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,322	0.4
Employed - BC	2,214	0.6
Unemployed - BC	108	-3.1
		Sep '06
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	4.6	4.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	6.2	6.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)		
	Nov 1/06	Nov 2/05
Prime Business Rate	6.00	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.40	5.40
- 5 year	6.60	6.15
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		
	Nov 1/06	Nov 2/05
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.1315	1.1802
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)	0.8822	0.8484
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Oct '06	% change on one year ago
BC	732.68	3.7
Canada	733.76	3.2
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada		
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca		

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A Guide to the BC Economy and Labour Market

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Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, October 2006
- Earnings & Employment Trends, October 2006

Next week

- Tourism Sector Monitor, October 2006
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 3rd Quarter 2006
- Exports, September 2006



